

Daoist Self-Assessment

Daoist Foundation 道教基金會

This Daoist self-assessment is intended to help individuals determine the degree to which their views and interpretations of the Daoist tradition are informed and reliable. It may be understood as “basic religious literacy” necessary for helping to understand, preserve, and transmit Daoism as such.

When did Daoism as a religious tradition begin and what was its primary assumed and advocated practice?

What is the earliest extant text associated with the inner cultivation lineages of classical Daoism? What is the date, and why is that historically significant?

What is the view about innate nature (*xìng* 性) expressed therein?

What are the four primary characteristics of the Dao 道 (Tao/Way) from a Daoist perspective?

Why is 道 (Dao [Tao/Way]) not a universal name for the sacred? What are some other tradition-specific names used by Daoists?

What are the primary forms of classical and foundational Daoist theology (views of the sacred)?

What are the Seven Periods and Four Divisions of Daoist history? What are the defining characteristics of the latter?

Name some of the primary models of Daoist practice and attainment. Why are these important for understanding Daoist adherence, community, and participation?

What are some indigenous Chinese Daoist names for “Daoism”?

Why is so-called “philosophical Daoism” solely a Western fabrication, fiction, and fantasy rooted in colonialist, missionary, and Orientalist legacies? What is an informed alternative?

Who wrote the *Dàodé jīng* 道德經 (*Tào-té chīng*; Scripture on the Dao and Inner Power) (trick question)?

What are the Seven Core Contemplative Chapters of the *Dàodé jīng*?

Name some of the Daoist lineages documented in the received *Zhuāngzǐ* 莊子 (*Chuāng-tzǔ*; Book of Master Zhuang)? What did they emphasize?

Who is traditionally identified as the founder of the Tiānshī 天師 (Celestial Masters) movement? How did it begin and how was it organized? Why is it also referred to as Zhèngyī 正一 (Orthodox Unity)?

Why are academic careerists so attached to a Tiānshī-centered construction of Daoist history? What were the primary influences on this construction?

Who were the “libationers” (*jìjiǔ* 祭酒)? What were the “parishes” (*zhì* 治)? And who were the so-called “seed-people” (*zhǒngmín* 種民)?

List some of the Nine Practices (*jiǔxíng* 九行) of the early Tiānshī movement.

What are the names of some roughly contemporaneous Daoist movements? How do these and other related details challenge contemporary Western Sinological hegemony?

What are some traditional Daoist views of *jīng*-scripture, and why is “scripture” (sacred text) a better approximation than “classic”?

What is the earliest Daoist scripture (*dào jīng* 道經)?

Name some of the movement-specific textual corpuses. Which texts are central and what do they emphasize?

Who is the founder of Quánzhēn 全真 (Complete Perfection) Daoism?

Name the first three Patriarchs of Quánzhēn.

What are the core Three Scriptures (*sān jīng* 三經) of Quánzhēn?

What did early Quánzhēn identify as the Four Hindrances (*sì hài* 四害)?

When was the received *Dào zàng* 道藏 (Daoist Canon) compiled? What is its place in Daoist history and Daoist tradition?

Who is identified as the traditional/honorific founder of the Lóngmén 龍門 (Dragon Gate) lineage? Who is the actual founder of the “official” lineage? Which texts did he compile as its basis?

Who is identified as the traditional/honorific founder of the Huàshān 華山 (Mount Hua) lineage?

What are the core Three Vows of Quánzhēn monasticism?

What types of changes occurred in the late imperial and modern expressions of internal alchemy (*nèi dān* 內丹)? How do the latter differ from earlier tradition-based Daoist approaches? How do these differ from modern popular constructions?

Name the Sānqīng 三清 (Three Purities). What are some associations?

What are the external Three Treasures (*wài sān bǎo* 外三寶)? How do Daoists traditionally view and understand their relationships?

The Zhōngguó dàojiào xiéhuì 中國道教協會 (Chinese Daoist/Taoist Association) is under the supervision of which division of the Chinese Communist state? How and why is this problematic?

Name a key Daoist sacred site. Why is it significant?

What are some traditional Daoist artistic pursuits and expressions? What is the associated material culture?

In terms of the emergence of so-called “Western Daoism,” what were the primary influences on the various constructions of “being Daoist”? What elements of the Daoist tradition challenge them?

Who were the earliest Daoist scholar-practitioners and ordained Daoist priests?

How does Western Daoism as part of global Daoism differ from “Popular Western Taoism” (PWT)?

When was the Daoist Foundation established? What are its primary charism and central texts?